

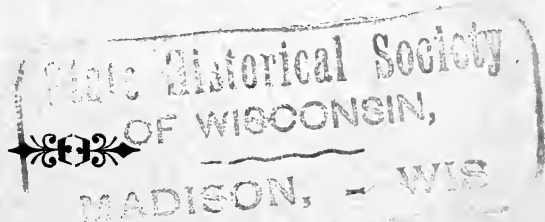
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TRADE UNIONISM,
CO-OPERATION,
AND
SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.

BY

H. QUELCH,

EDITOR OF *JUSTICE*.



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TRADE UNIONISM, CO-OPERATION, AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY.

By H. QUELCH.

The growth of the great industries, the grouping of men together in huge masses for the production of commodities, have taught the workers the great lesson of collective action, and forced them to see the advantage and necessity of combined effort. Trade Unions and Co-operative Associations are but defensive alliances, entered into by men who, without precisely understanding the cause, felt themselves being gradually crushed by the great economic forces over which they had no control and against which, individually, they were powerless. Although Trade Unionism and Co-operation are both apart from Socialism, yet each contains something of the principle of collectivism, and both are working-class movements of very considerable interest to the Social-Democrat. The very existence of these organisations is an answer to the individualist. Men sink their individuality in a Trade Union; submit to what capitalists call the "despotism of Trade Unionism," because they recognise their individual helplessness.

It is not within our province here to deal with the origin and history of trade unions. It is possible, doubtless, to trace their connection with the mediæval trade guilds, but we are only concerned with them in their present aspect as an institution in the industrial economy of to-day. As a matter of fact, modern trade unions only comprise a minority of the workers. Although during the past three years large numbers of working people, men and women, have formed themselves into unions, it is unfortunately still a fact that the majority of the working population is yet unorganised. The agitation of Social-Democrats, many of whom have taken an active part in the organisation of trade unions; the success of the agitation by the Gas Workers for shorter hours, and of the Matchmakers' Strike in the East-end of London, together with that extraordinary revolt of labour, known as the Great Dock Strike, gave in 1889 an impetus to, and an enthusiasm for, combination, which have resulted in the formation of trade unions among large numbers of workers who had hitherto been unorganised. The effect of this was seen at the Liverpool Trades

Congress in 1890, when 1,470,191 workers were represented, as against 885,655 represented at the Dundee Congress in 1889.

Of course it was only to be anticipated that the enthusiasm which had thus raised the numbers of the organised workers would to some extent evaporate. It is, nevertheless, to be regretted that this should be so, and that there should be a falling off in some directions from these unions. There is nothing to be gained by breaking up existing organisations. That trade unions have done good work in the past every workman, who knows anything about the matter, is bound to admit; that they may do still more useful work in the future we should be the last to deny. Without overestimating their value in the present, the workers have nothing to lose, and everything to gain, by keeping their organisations together, and it would certainly be most foolish for them to cast aside the weapon of trade unionism, weak though it be, until they have forged for themselves another and better one.

Some of the men who have rushed into it appear to have expected too much from the "New Unionism." They do not yet recognise that nothing but the abolition of capitalism and the wage system can effect any permanent material improvement in their condition, and that the utmost that trade unionism ever set itself to accomplish, was to make capitalism more tolerable to the worker, and to secure higher wages or shorter hours, when the state of trade rendered this possible. As a consequence, in some instances, they are disappointed. They do not find work more plentiful, and, though wages are higher, the individual difference is so slight as to be almost imperceptible. Unfortunately, too, there are many who are perfectly willing to take their share of any advantage that may be gained, but are not prepared to do their share of the work of organisation, or to bear their share of its burdens. In Trade Unionism, as in every other progressive movement the burden of the work too frequently falls on a few.

It is too often assumed by some of the older trade unionists that Social-Democrats are opposed to trade unionism. That is not so. We frequently find it necessary to attack—and that bitterly—the reactionary tendencies of some trade unionists; but, though the latter may and do attack Socialism, Social-Democrats do not attack trade unionism. Personally, I have always held that any Social-Democrat who was in the position of being able to be a member of a trade union and remained outside of it, was failing in his duty to the cause.

We have felt it necessary, however, to point out how

inefficacious trade unionism, pure and simple, must manifestly be, especially when applied to unskilled labour. Trade unions are, generally speaking, only successful when trade is good. With a revival of trade and a rise in prices, the workman naturally requires a higher wage, or some other improvement in his condition, as his share in the increased return. He can only get this, however, by combination, and hence a revival of trade is generally marked by a revival of trade unionism. But when bad trade comes again many of these organisations are overpowered in a vain endeavour to resist reductions. Mr. Burnett's Report on Trades Unions for 1890 shows that, while from 1872 to 1889, 666 unions were registered in England, 65 in Scotland, and 88 in Ireland, there only remained of these in 1889, 265 in England, 28 in Scotland, and 33 in Ireland; and the existence of even some of these was doubtful. This, of course, is without taking into account the number of unregistered organisations which have been formed and have gone under in the same time.

To be successful, moreover, trade unionism has to embrace the two principles, more or less antagonistic, of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. It aims at including all the members of a particular trade, and at the same time to limit their numbers and exclude outsiders to such an extent as to make the trade a close corporation in order to prevent the competition for work which would destroy all the advantages of high wages, &c., which form the ultimate aim of trade unionism.

Now it must be obvious that it is impossible to apply these principles to unskilled labour. If it is attempted to form a close corporation of just so many men as can at a particular time find employment in any given industry, and to exclude all others, the result is the creation, outside the organisation, of a hostile force, equally as capable of doing the work as the men inside, and ready and willing at any moment to be made use of by the employers against the union. If, on the other hand, the union takes in all comers, there arises inside the ranks of the union that very competition for work which it is one of the main objects of a trade union to get rid of.

In truth the new unionism has suffered considerably from both these causes. Those unions which have attempted the exclusive policy, have earned thereby the bitter hostility not only of non-unionists, but of the members of other unions, because they have endeavoured to save their own members from the competition of the latter. On the other hand, those

which believe in taking in all and sundry, which do not care what contribution a man pays so long as he has a union card, even if it costs him nothing, have their members constantly asking, "What's the good of belonging to a union, if it don't get you work?"

Here, then, is the lesson which experience should have taught us long ago, that Trade Unionism on the old lines is most useful to those who can best do without it. The skilled artisan, who is far better able to stand alone than is the unskilled labourer, is necessarily so much stronger in combination than is the latter. The difficulties in the way of trade union organisation increase as its power becomes weaker, and the possibilities of gaining any advantage by its means become more remote. Where men possess a monopoly of a certain amount of technical skill, and can make of their trade union a close corporation, the formation of such a combination is comparatively easy, and the advantages to be derived therefrom are self-evident. With unskilled labour, on the other hand, in which men drift about from one occupation to another, the formation of a close corporation is impossible, and the advantages of a union are not so apparent; while the indigence of the men renders its establishment and maintenance a matter of far greater difficulty. Members of the skilled trades are too ready to point to what they have effected by their unions, and to say to the labourer, "You go and do the same." If we had universal technical education, which would abolish the monopoly of the skilled men, they would very soon understand some of the difficulties which stand in the way of the labourer—not, by the way, that all skilled artisans are even yet prepared to admit that the labourer should have equal rights with themselves with regard to combination.

War is the last argument of kings, and the last resort of a trade union is a strike. Men demand certain improvements. Their demands are refused, and they decline to work until these demands are conceded. In order that they should succeed it is necessary for them to induce all other men to refuse likewise. In a skilled trade this is comparatively simple. Yet the strikes of artisans are not always successful. What chance, then, has the unskilled labourer? If there is a strike of engineers or carpenters, only engineers or carpenters, as the case may be, can fill their places; but if it is a strike of porters, of gas-men, of scavengers, &c., labourers brought from any other department of industry can fill their places. This has been experienced over and over again. It is perfectly true, of course, that strangers

cannot do the work as well as those accustomed to it, but they can get through it if a sufficient number are employed. In the case of unskilled labour it is, generally speaking, a question of quantity—of employing a larger number of men to do a given amount of work; in the case of skilled work it is a question of quality—the possession of a certain technical knowledge—the want of which cannot be made up by the employment of any additional number of men. The conditions are entirely different. Yet it is generally imagined that they can be dealt with by precisely the same means!

Trade unionism is not, for the unskilled worker, so much a weapon for fighting the capitalists as a means for securing a weapon wherewith to fight them. The utility of the "New Unionism" lies less in the little gains of wages or leisure it has secured for the worker—of which, on the first opportunity, they may be deprived—than in its political effects. It represents the workers as a political force. It is in this direction mainly that the new unions must progress if they would succeed in achieving any permanent material advantage. They must become more political and revolutionary, not from a party but from a class point of view. To go on following the old beaten paths of trade unionism is simply to go on exhausting the possibilities of error for an indefinite period. If the new unions are simply to play the part of regulators of wages, as trade and prices rise and fall, they will be of very slight advantage to the workers compared with what they might accomplish if they took a broader view of their opportunities and their duties. What they have to do, and that now, is to use the power which organisation gives them to get control of the political machinery of the country, and use it for the advancement of their class. By this means they could, if they chose, achieve as much in a year or two as would be gained in a century by the old methods of trade agitation and strikes.

Take one of the practical measures which we Social Democrats have pushed forward until it has practically gained the approval of all the workmen's organisations in the kingdom—take the limitation of the hours of labour to eight per day. The old unionists would suggest that this should be effected by the old methods, notwithstanding the fact that even those who are able to use the old methods are only a small minority of the workers, and that those who most need a limitation of their working hours are precisely those who are outside organisation altogether, and whose miserable condition renders organisation on trade union lines almost impossible. Not in the interest of

these alone, but also in that of those who are organised, is a limitation of the labour day needed ; but the want of combination among these unorganised workers renders it impossible of attainment by the old methods. Surely that is no reason why we should be condemned to wait for what everyone admits to be necessary until the almost impossible task of organising the unorganised majority is accomplished, when by a determined and intelligent political effort the thing could be done in the next session of Parliament.

True, in this connection, the trade unionist, old or new, is prepared to shout "No politics." This is out of deference to the desire of party politicians to maintain the old party divisions among workmen. The cry now should be "No party politics." Workmen should sink all party and national divisions, and use political or any other means for their class advancement.

The reasonableness of the demand for an eight hour day is generally admitted. Everybody agrees that eight hours out of the twenty-four is quite long enough for any man to work. There are doubtless but few employers who would not be prepared to agree with this in the abstract. When it comes, however, to practical business they are not concerned with abstract questions of right or justice or morality. All that they have to do is to buy all their commodities, labour included, in the cheapest market—and long hours mean cheaper labour. If the workmen demand shorter hours, and endeavour to enforce the demand by trade union effort simply, what does this mean? It means that the employer is not going to surrender without a struggle, and that therefore the demand can only be enforced by a strike. Even under the most favourable conditions, a strike carried out by a wealthy society of skilled workmen for such an object involves terrible hardship and loss, as witness the twenty weeks strike of the London carpenters and joiners. It may even end in disaster. How much more hopeless, then, would such a strike be among even the organised unskilled labourers, when it takes a year's contributions to raise a week's strike pay. Or, worse still, how much more hopeless for those who work the longest hours, who get the least pay, who have no organisation, and for whom organisation is almost impossible, and yet who most need that for which such a strike would take place. To advocate a strike for this end would, under present conditions, be absolute madness.

It is, of course, suggested that employers would make all reasonable concessions if they were met and reasoned with ; that

the capitalist is a perfectly reasonable creature, who only needs to have the matter put fairly before him to do what is right and just by his workpeople. Well, we have had some experience of the sweet reasonableness of the capitalist in this connection, and it amounts to this—that he believes it to be his duty to make the best terms he can for himself without any reference to the rights and wrongs of the matter at all. After all their experience in this direction workmen must make up their minds that they have nothing to expect from the goodwill of the employers, and that the only alternative to legislative action is a strike. Now, there are very few unionists who believe in strikes. They agree with the resolution of the Brussels International Congress that the strike is a two-edged weapon, which as often as not injures the user ; or, as Burt put it at the Newcastle Congress, it is like a boomerang, which, when thrown by an unskilful hand, may return and wound the thrower. No man who knows the terrible hardships, the misery and privation, involved, could advocate a strike. A strike means war, war in which the killed and wounded, the want and suffering, the ruin and desolation are all on one side. No general, unless he be of the type of Napoleon the Little, can enter on a war like this with a light heart. "Leaders" and "agitators" are too often accused of lightly calling men out on strike. In nine cases out of ten the charge is baseless. The difficulties which the "leaders" have to contend against are to keep men from coming out on strike, and then to encourage the wavering, to strengthen the weak, to coerce the recreant and bribe the blackleg in order to save the strike from being a failure after their advice and caution have all been set at nought, and, despite their warnings, the men have struck. In nine cases out of ten, too, the men who are most eager to strike are most clamorous for strike pay, and first to turn in to work when the funds are exhausted, and to denounce the man whose advice they scouted, when the strike has failed. In view of these grave difficulties, although no one could advocate the surrender of the right to strike and to combine for that purpose, a strike must be regarded as the last resort, and the workman should cast about for a more efficient and less dangerous weapon.

The old unionism was characterised by a dislike of political action, and the only difference between the "old" and the "new" is that the latter is more ready to use political means for social ends, and has more "advanced" ideas. But this is the case only to a limited extent. We still talk of "fair" wages,

and "fair" profits, of "good" and "bad" employers. We still recognise the right of the capitalist to exploit, so long as he does his exploiting gently and conforms to trade union rules. We still set up a standard rate of wages as one might set up a standard for the guidance of robbers, and say, "So long as you leave the persons robbed a given amount you shall be held to be honourable men, no matter of what you may rob them, but if you reduce this amount by ever so little you shall be held accursed."

It is much to be feared that to a large extent the "new" unionism is only the "old" unionism applied to unskilled labour; that the ideals are no higher, and the means no better adapted to the end. That is to say, the new unionism is only trade unionism, not Social Democracy. While trade unionism recognises the present system of society, justifies capitalism, and defends wage-slavery, and only seeks to soften the tyranny of the one and assuage the evils of the other, Social Democracy aims at destroying the whole system. It is chiefly as a possible means to this end, as an educational influence, as a means for sufficiently improving his position as to make the workman discontented with that position, that trade unionism is useful from a Social-Democratic point of view.

What is true of trade unionism is equally true of co-operation. It is most valuable to those among the workers who are best off. The artisan, earning a regular weekly wage, has not only a better opportunity of becoming a member of a co-operative society than the more precariously-employed and more poorly-paid labourer, but the advantage to him is greater by reason of his having more money to spend at the store. Even where the poorer individual is able to continue his membership, the relative position of the two remains unchanged, but in many cases the poorer members have to sell out, and then the affair becomes simply a joint stock company of the more fortunate, the race being once more to the swift, the battle to the strong. This is the case where co-operation has been commercially successful, and where it has been thus successful it has done more than any abstract argument could do to demonstrate its absolute failure to materially change the economic conditions of working-class life. But in London distributive co-operation has not been phenomenally successful.

For this there are several reasons. Most Londoners of the poorer class purchase their commodities in small quantities, the number of small shops near their dwellings rendering simple and easy a practice which is engendered in most cases by casual and

precarious wages. Then again the co-operative stores have to compete with large private stores, where the margin of profit is small, and the proprietors of which have all the advantage on their side. A co-operative store starts with the object of saving for the consumer the profits of the middleman, and supplying, as far as possible, pure, unadulterated goods; but the profits of the middleman are made by advantage in the market, by adulteration, and by sweating. Consequently the co-operative store is unfairly handicapped—as the private store keeper, with a small margin, it may be, but with a large aggregate, of profit, is able to sell cheaper—and cheapness is everything. Of course people should buy good goods, even if they are dear, and not cheap and nasty, but they do not. Low wages compel the poor to buy the cheap, shoddy commodities, the production of which keeps wages down and intensifies poverty. This is the accursed round of commercialism. Low wages create a demand for the worst kind of articles of consumption, and this demand is supplied by overwork, by sweating, and the worst paid labour and most inferior workmanship.

It is just as useless to preach to the poor the advantage of buying unadulterated goods at co-operative stores—when you can get them even there—as it is to pass resolutions at Trade Union Congresses against sweating. Who is the chief patron of the sweater but the workman? Fancy a docker buying a suit of clothes that has been made by fairly-paid labour! It is not because they like shoddy clothing, bosh butter, sanded sugar, and birched tea, that the workers buy these things; it is because they can afford no better. And it is because they can afford no better, because there is a market for them, that these things are produced. In nine cases out of ten a workman would never buy a suit of clothes at all if he waited till he could pay such a price for it as would allow even a reasonable amount to be paid for the labour expended in making.

Under these circumstances it is not possible for a co-operative association to successfully compete with the private trader and at the same time supply superior and purer commodities to its customers, and act fairly towards its employés. It has for some time been a standing complaint at Trades Union Congresses that certain co-operative societies are unfair employers. They employ non-union labour and pay less than trade union wages. In its inception co-operation was socialistic, and its originators were Socialists. Likewise, very often, those who start a co-operative society are enthusiasts, who are prepared

to make sacrifices, to resist the pressure which impels the poor to buy cheap goods and nasty, but after a while others come in who are mere dividend hunters, who, while willing to draw dividends and profits, will not even patronize their own store, unless they can purchase there as cheaply as of the individual trader who cuts down prices by adulterating his goods or sweating his hands.

But while co-operation has not been particularly successful in London, it has met with very considerable success in other places. A commercial concern which started some fifty years ago with a few pounds scraped together by a few poor men, and which now comprises a million members and realises annual profits to the tune of three millions cannot be described as anything but a success. And yet it is this very success as a commercial concern which demonstrates the failure of co-operation, as a means of emancipating the workers. Nevertheless, this was the hope of many of the original advocates of co-operation. They imagined that, starting as a small store, or a small workshop or factory, this co-operative society would grow and grow until it absorbed the whole industry of the world—until we had universal co-operation. If it had not been tried, people might still believe in the possibility of arriving at such a consummation, but it has been tried—and has been successful as a commercial undertaking—but it has absolutely failed to produce any appreciable improvement in the condition of the working classes. To many co-operators, doubtless, this is a matter of no concern. So long as the store affords them a safe investment for their little savings, pays them five per cent on their investments, and a dividend on their purchases, as well as offering these on terms as reasonable as can be obtained elsewhere, it serves all the ends which, to their narrow minds, are desirable. To these there is nothing to be said. They are really not co-operators but capitalists. And yet there is no doubt that they form the overwhelming majority of the so-called co-operators of to-day. To them the commercial success of co-operation must be a source of intense gratification unalloyed by the knowledge that it has lamentably failed to approximate to its high ideal.

But it is only in connection with that ideal that we are concerned with co-operation here. It does not interest us that co-operative stores enable the lower middle class and the aristocracy of labour to purchase more economically, if not more cheaply than they otherwise could do; that co-operation affords another opportunity for thrift on the part of those who have

something to save. The important thing for us is the consideration as to whether co-operation has done anything for those who, because of their poverty, have always had to buy "cheap and nasty" when they were able to buy at all, or whether it has given the opportunity of thrift to those who have hitherto had nothing to save. We must here regard co-operation, not as a commercial enterprise, but as a factor in social progress, and in this connection we are bound to arrive at the conclusion that it has effected nothing and is absolutely valueless, except to a certain extent as an educational influence. As an educational agency it has, like other gigantic joint stock undertakings, demonstrated the uselessness of the individual capitalist and given workmen an object lesson on the facility and economy with which they themselves, when organised, can manage the most important industrial enterprises, without a master. Doubtless also, from the moral point of view, co-operation has had some educational effect. But that is all.

It is urged, of course, that co-operation has done good in eliminating the middleman. It has become fashionable of late years to denounce the middleman. But his elimination does not always benefit those on whose behalf the outcry against him is generally raised. So long as the workman is robbed of all but a subsistence it is of little importance whether the chief robber shares part of the spoil with an underling for relieving him of some of his dirty work, or whether he sticks to the whole "swag" himself. This has generally been the effect of the abolition of the middleman. In the work of production, the amount saved by his elimination has not been added to the workers' wages, but to the employers' profits; and in the distribution of commodities it has not meant reduced prices for the consumer, but enhanced profits for the merchant or manufacturer.

But, it may again be urged, the ordinary workman can, if he likes, become a shareholder in the "co-op." So he may become a shareholder in a railway—if he likes; but this does not make the capitalist domination of our railways less a fact. Even were all the workmen in a district shareholders in the co-operative society, the better paid among them would still "have the bulge on the others," as Uncle Sam would say. In a co-operative store, as elsewhere, the man with two pounds a week is worth just twice as much as the man with one pound. The two-pound man can spend twice as much and save twice as much as the one-pound man. And, generally speaking, instead of levelling up, all that

co-operation does is to increase and intensify this difference, with the result that in very many cases the co-operative societies are composed almost exclusively of the artisan class, who look down with contempt on the poor labourer who cannot even afford to be a co-operator.

In some provincial districts practically the whole of the work of distribution is carried on by co-operative stores, and the small shopkeeper is comparatively unknown. This has not, however, made any material difference to the great mass of the workers in those districts. They work as hard and live as hard as the workers in centres less favoured by co-operation. They appear to experience the same difficulty in making both ends meet, and look forward with eagerness for their "divi" in order to pay rent or buy clothes, or to supplement their wages in some other way. In very many cases, too, mill-owners and other large capitalists are also shareholders in the co-operative society.

It comes to this, then, that neither Trade Unionism nor co-operation, on present lines, can solve the great social problem, why the most industrious are the poorest—nor can they emancipate the workers. Of course if Trade Unionism developed into a universal federation of labour and seized the political machinery in order to organise industry and control production and distribution, it would be within measurable distance of that emancipation. But that would be Social Democracy; and useful as Trade Unions may have been and are, they are not socialist organisations nor are their members Social Democrats. In like manner, if Co-operation were to become universal, to include all workers in its ranks, to regulate the amount of work according to the needs of the community, and devote its efforts to supplying these needs instead of to creating profit, it would be near securing the same end. But this also is Social Democracy, and co-operators to-day are not Social Democrats. Logically both trade unionists and co-operators should be Social Democrats. A trade unionist, who believes in trade unionism, would surely like to see it spread and spread until the whole community was one vast trade union, with elected delegate committees, carrying out rules made with the consent of the whole of the members and controlling the whole of the political and economic forces in the interest of the members, until there was not a blackleg or knobstick on the face of the earth. Surely too, the co-operator who has any faith in the principles of co-operation, would like to see them universally adopted, not alone by individuals but by nations, until we had a real national

and international co-operative commonwealth. In either case the result would be Social Democracy—a democratically organised community having control of its own economic and social forces and using these for the common good.

As a matter of fact, however, neither trade unionists or co-operators generally speaking, believe in or even understand abstract principles. The trade unionist regards the capitalist employer as a necessary factor in the social economy of the world, and as a really beneficent being, so long as he pays trade union rates of wages and respects trade union rules—quite oblivious of the fact that the very position of the capitalist makes his interests, beyond a certain point, diametrically opposed to those of the workman.

It is to the workman's interest that the whole of his fellow workers should be employed. It is to the capitalist's interest to employ as few men as possible, not merely with a view to economy but because the competition of a large number of unemployed has a salutary effect in keeping down the wages of those in employment. It is to the interest of the workman to get as much wages as possible. It is to the employer's interest to pay as little as possible for his labour. With all this, however, the average trade unionist will have nothing to do with the wild revolutionary Social Democrat who would abolish the capitalist altogether, but rather regards the latter as being on the whole a decent sort of fellow, who only needs a little pressure to be put on him to induce him to concede all that is necessary.

But while the ideal of the average trade unionist is to make terms with the capitalist so as to make wage-slavery tolerable, the ideal of the average co-operator is somewhat lower, his desire apparently being to transform a number of workmen into petty shareholding capitalists. That is why I, who am a trade unionist and a co-operator as well as a Social Democrat, am more ardent for trade unionism than for co-operation, because trade unionism does, at any rate, mean even now, the organisation of workmen as workmen, and not as capitalists or on the side of capitalists. Trades unions, aiming at improving the position of workmen as such, constantly find that they have in spite of themselves to enter into conflict with the employing class, as witness the late strike of the Durham miners and of the Engineers. Here the unions in both cases were most conciliatory towards the employers. This conflict will go on and deepen. Unconsciously men will find themselves forced into the class war in which the the workers with their organisations will be

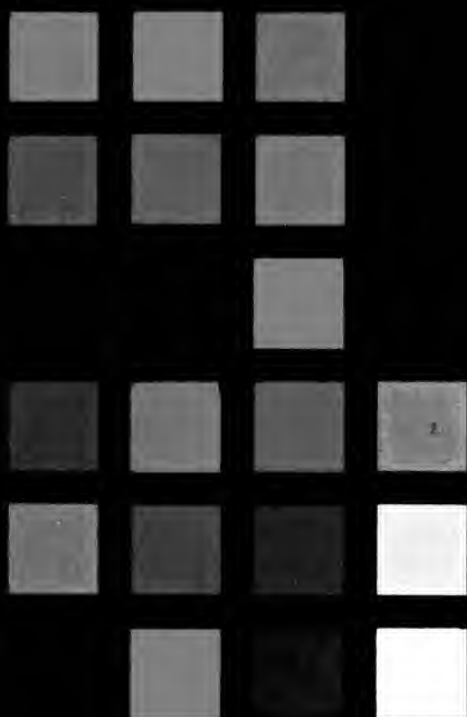
on one side, and the capitalists on the other ; and from which conflict only can Social Democracy be evolved.

Co-operation, on the contrary, though regarded by the individual trader as an enemy, does not necessarily enter into conflict with the capitalist at all. Indeed, so far as it transforms workmen into shareholders it forms a bulwark for capitalism, the same as the creation of small landholders or any other class of small proprietors would do. As educational agencies both trade unionism and co-operation have done an immense work. In addition to this, through trade unionism workmen have had many thousands of pounds additional wages, which but for their unions they would never have had. The pity is that so many held aloof, and have been content to participate in the gain, without assisting in the work, and that those who have done the work and secured the gain have not turned their gains to greater advantage. As I said over and over again to the men when they were out in the strike of 1889, the lesson of the need and power of organisation which they appeared to have learned by that strike was far more valuable to them than the mere material advantage of a rise in wages, which after all was individually inconsiderable, and which will disappear on the first decline in trade. Even now as a matter of fact, the employers are trying to filch it from them. Unfortunately this lesson appears to be almost forgotten already, and we seem to be again approaching a period of apathy, to be again succeeded by another conflict in order to oppose or to recover a reduction in wages.

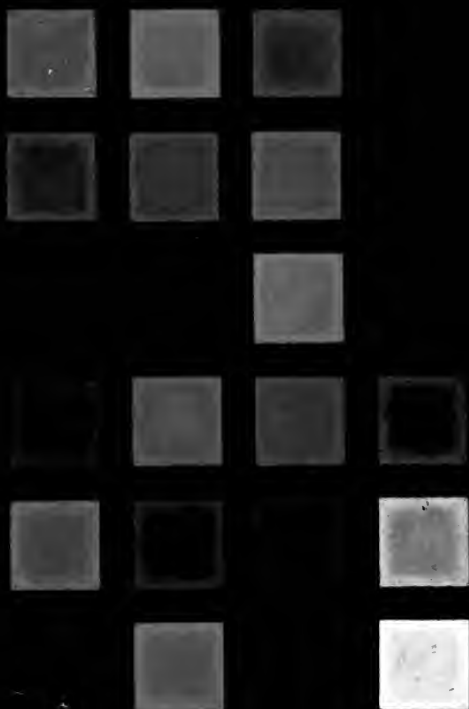
Is it not time that we combined and strove for something higher, wider, and more far-reaching than this ? Let the trade unionists unite, combine, federate ; not for constantly squabbling with the capitalist over the spoil which the workers alone create, but to secure for the latter, organised, the control of their own tools and raw materials—of the mines, the railways, the factories, the shipping, the land—of all those things which only have value through their labour. Let the Co-operators co-operate with each other, with Trade Unionists and Social-Democrats for the same object. Let us all agitate, educate and organise to form the workers of the world into a gigantic trade union, an International Co-operation, a Social-Democratic Commonwealth.

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